



Trof. Beuner.

### A FEW REMARKS

ON THE

# "FALSE" ASSUMPTION

OF

# MEDICAL TITLES,

ADDRESSED TO

The Members of the Portsmouth, Portsen, and Gosport Medical Registration Association,

BY A

### NON-RESIDENT MEMBER.

"If any one does an act hurtful to others, there is a primâ facie case for punishing him, if not by law, by general disapprobation."

Mill on Liberty.

### Portsmouth:

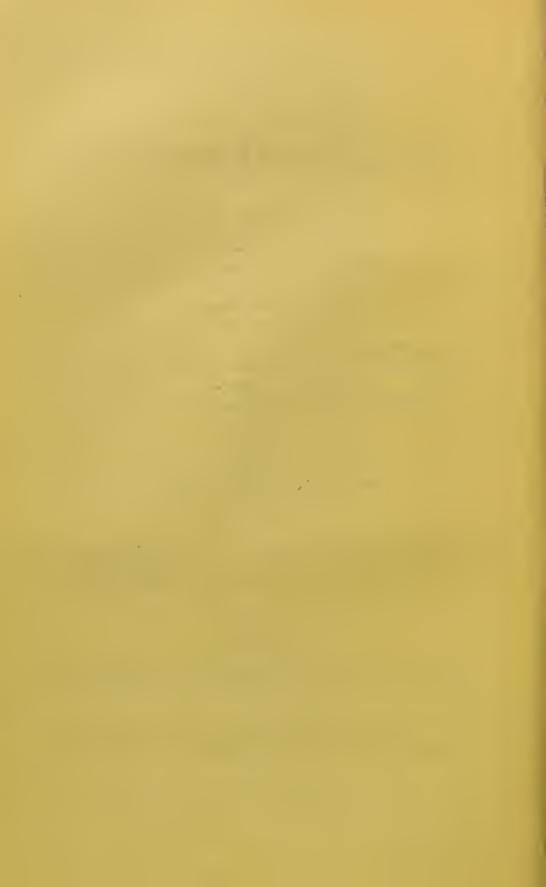
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### REMARKS.

Ever since the first publication of the New Regulations of the Edinburgh College of Physicians, on the 8th of March, 1859, the Medical Profession has been in a state of agitation. No Medical journal could be opened without this fact being obtruded on its notice.

The question therefore of the "wilful" and "false" assumption of the title of "M.D." (See Sect. xl. of Medical Act), or its synonym "Dr." in the eyes of the public, by the Licentiates of that College became a general one, and an abuse, claiming correction by the very first rule of our Association.

Feeling strongly and decidedly on this subject, a member, at the very first formation of the "Portsmouth, Portsea, and Gosport Registration Association," prepared the following resolution to elicit the opinion of the Association on the subject:—

"That inasmuch as this Association is formed to aid in carrying out strictly the provisions of the 'Medical Act,' and to ensure correct registration (see Sect. xxvii. and xl., also Schedule A. 10.) it use its influence in dissuading from the irregular adoption of any title, which does not appear in the 'Medical Register,' after the name of the person using it."—Nov. 1859.

That resolution, however, at the private suggestion of the President, he consented to withhold for

the time, on condition that the assumed titles were not officially annexed to the Names of the Members claiming them, by the Hon. Secretary of the Association.

That condition, it soon became apparent, was not fulfilled. In fact the Hon. Secretary was placed, unless armed with a distinct expression of opinion by the Association, in a very delicate

position.

In consequence of this, as it were, tacit recognition of these assumed titles by the Association, some more of its members have obtained the license of the Edinburgh College, and assumed the disputed title; and it is said that others have been only prevented doing so by a Resolution of which notice was given at a Special Meeting of the Association, held on the 28th of March, 1860.

The Resolution, as read and accepted at that meeting without a single preliminary objection,

was as follows:—

RESOLVED—"Inasmuch as this and other Registration Associations have for their object the maintenance of the dignity of our Profession, the avoiding of confusion, and the strict carrying out of the 'Medical Act,' that this Association does not recognize and will not approve of any of its members assuming any titles save those by which he is designated in the 'Medical Register.'"—28th March, 1860.

It was then agreed unanimously that a Special Meeting of the Association should be called for the 2nd of May, of which due notice, and of its object, should be given to the members.

It may be here remarked that it has been argued that the prefix of "Dr." on the door-plate and card does not necessarily imply that the person who assumes it wishes to be taken for a "Doctor of Physic" any more than for a "Doctor of Music," ready to impart instruction on the violin or other instrument, or to lead the orchestra at some fashionable soirée! But the following letter, addressed to the Editor of the "Times," and published in that journal on the 30th of March, two days after the notice of the resolution quoted above, shows what some Licentiates of the Edinburgh College without a University degree, mean by "Dr." when they appropriate the title.

## THE ALLEGED ACCIDENT ON THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—My attention has been ealled to a letter in the "Times" of yesterday (signed "Thomas Waddington, M.D., of Wakefield"), the signature of which is as gross and impudent a fabrication as the eircumstances which the writer professes to detail. I need only say that there is no "M.D." here named Waddington but myself, and that I was not on the Great Northern or any other railway on the 26th inst., when the accident is alleged to have occurred.

Having obtained possession of the original letter, I have handed it over to my solicitors, in the hope that they may be enabled to discover and bring to justice the perpetrator of this very stupid hoax.

1 am, Sir, your obedient servant, EDWARD WADDINGTON, M.D.

Wakefield, March 28.

The gentleman who thus puts M.D. after his name has no title whatever to it, as is proved by reference to the Register and Medical Directory for 1860, and by his withholding a reply to the following letter:—

Portsmouth, 11th April, 1860.

Sir,—As the question of Titles is under consideration in a Local Registration Association, of which I am a member, may I take the

liberty of asking if the omission of M.D. after your name in the

"Medical Register for 1860" is accidental?

My observation has been directed to the point by the apparent discrepancy between the "Register" and a letter in the "Times" of March 30th, bearing your signature.

I beg you will excuse the liberty I take in asking you to remove any ground for misconception on my part in the matter?

Believe me, Sir, Yours faithfully,

Edward Waddington, Esq., M.D., Wakefield, Yorkshire.

This seems a suitable opportunity of explaining, though one would suppose it superfluous, that the title of M.D. can only be conferred by a University. It is true that till the passing of the Medical Act the Archbishop of Canterbury had the privilege of conferring that degree, and a few names accordingly appear in the Register with that distinctive title. But if His Grace still possesses the privilege of granting the Degree, such degree, if conferred since the passing of the Act, is not allowed to be registered. (See Schedule A. 10 of Medical Act.) This privilege, which appears so strange to us, has survived the period when no one could act as a Physician in any part of England without the license of the Bishop of the Diocese in which he practised! This episcopal jurisdiction only terminated in the reign of Henry the Eighth, by whom the Charter was granted which delegated important privileges to the College of Physicians of London.

By that Charter the College was empowered to prevent any one from practising as a Physician in London, or within seven miles, without its License. Hence arose the two grades of its Licentiates and Extra-Licentiates, the former empowered to practise

in London and the latter on easier terms extra urbem, but all had to undergo examination, and there are well-known cases of rejection! Among those Licentiates were some who had no University Degree. But the College having the monopoly of the license to practise physic, and the power to prosecute those who evaded their authority, granted their License, or Extra License more particularly, to a limited number of practitioners of whose qualifications they satisfied themselves by examination. such Licentiates of the London College, who were practising as Physicians, the public have applied the title of "Dr.," and the Profession up to a certain period, in consideration that the irregularity was on a small scale, as a matter of courtesy did not interfere. This, however, is no longer sanctioned by the London College of Physicians, as is shown by the following letter from its Registrar:—

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, LONDON, S.W., April 17th, 1860.

DEAR SIR,— I beg to thank you for your letter, and its enclosures, of the 16th inst. and beg to inform you in reply that, so far as this College is concerned, it has no desire, I believe, to increase the confusion now already unfortunately existing in our profession by assuming the power to confer the title of M.D. on its Licentiates, a title, I imagine, which Universities alone can confer.

So desirous is this College of avoiding the appearance of assuming a power which it does not possess, that I am restrained in all official communications to persons who are not M.D. from addressing them as Doctor.

Believe me,
Faithfully yours,
HENRY PITMAN, Registrar.

Concurrently, however, with the coming into effect of the Medical Act, a step was taken by the College of Physicians of Edinburgh, which, unin-

tentionally as appears on their part, has led to great abuse. The license which they had up to a certain period been in the habit of granting to Graduates alone, as the initiatory step to the Fellowship, had become no longer necessary for

that purpose, and fell into entire disuse.

The Medical Act, however, conferred on all British Universities and Colleges of Physicians the power of granting liberty to practise medicine in all parts of the British dominions, by a license, equivalent on a wider scale to that of the Apothecaries' Company of London, whose power was hitherto limited to England. The Edinburgh College of Physicians, therefore, was not slow to avail itself of its new privilege, and in publishing its New Regulations, dated 8th of March, 1859, threw out the following tempting bait:—

8. For one year after the passing of these Regulations, the following Classes of Applicants may be admitted Licentiates of the College without Examination, provided that they do not derive any profit from the sale of drugs or medicine, and that they produce Certificates of Character and Professional Qualification satisfactory to the Council—

First, Gentlemen who have been Fifteen Years in actual Practice.

Second, Licentiates of any of the existing Licensing Boards.

19. For one year from this date the Entrance Fee payable by a Licentiate shall be Ten Pounds, exclusive of the Stamp Duty of Fifteen Pounds.

N.B.—Under the Medical Act, Licentiates of the College of Physicians can claim to be entered in the Register, and can practise Medicine in any part of Her Majesty's Dominions; and it is expected that, by the New Charter, Licentiates will be admitted Members of the College.

By order of the Council,

D. R. HALDANE, M.D., Hon. Sec. Edinburgh, 8th March, 1859.

It is needless to say that the promulgation of such conditions called forth immediate remonstrances not only from the College of Physicians of London, but from the Profession at large. For it was not to be suffered that the mere fact of having been fifteen years in practice without any qualification, should entitle the applicant, on remitting a cheque to Edinburgh, to receive what might be considered by the public a respectable, and even by the profession, according to the Medical Act, a legal qualification. The College had immediately to retire from its position, and on the 26th of April issued a lengthy communication, signed by the President, recalling the condition most complained of, but still adhering to their intention of granting their License without examination, and without appearance before them, to all who having some qualification should communicate with them.

The following is an extract from the letter of

the 26th April, 1859:—

The College has, in the first place, to express its extreme regret, that owing to an inadvertance and precipitancy, the causes of which it is unnecessary to enter into, the New Regulations of the College respecting Licentiates were made public before having been duly considered, according to practice, and when they contained articles in a shape which may have been distasteful to the London College of Physicians. Since this premature publication the Regulations have undergone revision, according to law, at three separate meetings, at which the following alterations have been made:—

3. During the year of admission of Licentiates without examination, and without a university degree, no one will be admitted without a license from some other medical corporation; and persons in practice for fifteen years without any license, who were admitted under the original Resolutions, will not be allowed to apply for the license of the College at all.

4. All candidates under this act of grace, besides producing testimonials of character and experience, and being subjected to

the scrutiny of the Council of the College, must be submitted to the ballot by the Fellows, of whom two-thirds must concur, other-

wise the candidate will be rejected.

With these restrictions, and under a conscientious application of all the rules, the College ventures to hope that no person will be admitted into its list of Licentiates who does not deserve to be enrolled as a Licentiate of a College of Physicians.

(Signed) ALEXANDER WOOD, P.

To the President of the Royal College of Physicians of London.

It would thus appear, and it has been argued, that the College required certain testimonials of respectability on the part of the applicant, and that his claim should be submitted to the ballot of the Fellows of the College. But it may be asked what gentlemen residing in Edinburgh could possibly know for certain of the crowd of applicants from the most remote parts of England, whose contributions to their exchequer were pouring in in upon them to the amount of more than £4000!

And it is a singular fact, that in perusing the list of Licentiates admitted between the 26th of April and the 1st of December, in all 415, there are very few indeed whose address is not in some part of England, and that more than 50 per cent. already possessed the license of the Apothecaries' Company! Many, therefore, must have applied for this license to practise who did not require it,

and some with a further object in view.

The totally different position of the Edinburgh College of Physicians as compared with the London College, was probably unknown to many of them. The former body possesses no exclusive privileges, and has never admitted, till April, 1859, even as a Licentiate, any one but a University Graduate. And no shadow of a local custom existed to warrant the idea that its Licentiates, under its new

regulations, were receiving any thing but a simple

license to practice medicine.

Those, therefore, who took the license, with the idea that such license, by custom or courtesy, gave them any further claim than they already possessed, to style themselves "Dr." publicly, or to be styled so by others familiarly, or like Mr. E. Waddington, of Wakefield, to add "M.D." to their signature, committed a very sad though, perhaps in some cases, a willing mistake.

To prove this, there is the following reply from Dr. Christison, of Edinburgh, a Fellow of the College, a Member of the General Council under the Medical Act, and President of the Scottish Registration Association, to the following letter

addressed to him:—

#### To Professor Christison.

11th April, 1860.

Dear Sir,—I trust you will excuse the liberty I take in addressing you, my desire to co-operate with you in maintaining the dignity of our common profession must plead my excuse. I read with much interest your remarks at the Preliminary Meeting, on the 24th of February, of the Scottish Registered Medical Practitioners' Association. I am a Member of the Portsmouth Registration Association, which includes among its members six who have procured the equivocal License of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, and who, without a University Degree, have in at least three instances put "Dr." on their cards and doorplates. Thinking that a stand ought to be made against such deception on the public, and injustice to their brother practitioners, I have given notice of a resolution, to be taken into consideration at a Special Meeting to be held early in May, of which I send you a copy.

My chief object in taking the liberty of writing to you, however, is, that I may learn from you if the license of the Edinburgh College has ever, in Scotland, been considered as even tacitly encouraging the doubtful claim of its holder to assume, without a University Degree, the title of "Dr." Am I correct too in supposing that till last year the College did not grant its licence

even, to any but Graduates? If both these suppositions are correct, its Licentiates without a Degree have a fortiori no right in England to claim, or rather to assert as a right what was once on a small scale tacitly, though not frankly, conceded by courtesy to the few to whom at one time the London College of Physicians granted its license, though they had not a University degree. That concession, however, in consequence of the late proceedings of the Edinburgh College, and the false assumption of them by its Licentiates in England, numbering, I believe, last year nearly 450, must be of necessity withdrawn.

To show the lengths to which some of those Licentiates carry their indelicacy, there appeared in the "Times," of the 30th ult., a letter from a person signing himself "Edward Waddington, M.D., of Wakefield," who has no Degree, but is a Licentiate of 1859, of the Edinburgh College of Physicians. The case has been brought under the notice of Dr. Hawkins. I can reckon up at least twenty in this county who have availed themselves of the

facilities offered by the Edinburgh College of Physicians.

I have a son at your University preparing for his Degree in due time. What satisfaction is there for parents incurring that expense, if the public are to be permitted to confound Graduates of a University with those who, without being in any way warranted, assume the same title?

### EDINBURGH, 14th April, 1860.

DEAR SIR,—I was absent from town all yesterday, and there-

fore have been unable to answer your letter sooner.

You are probably aware that, as a Fellow of the College of Physicians, I resisted with all the means in my power, but unsuccessfully, the Regulations which founded the new License of that College for professional men not Doctors of Medicine. I am afraid I have exhausted all my power and influence in the matter. But I shall communicate your letter to the Secretary, complain of the practices you mention, and ask whether the College will put them down by some distinct uncompromising Resolution.

It is my persuasion that the members of the College who carried the new License, have no desire that the Licentiates, who are not Graduates, should follow any practice calculated to make them pass for such with the public. But I think it is the bounden duty of the College to declare that all practices of the sort are unlawful, and contrary to the intention of the College, when the "License

to practise Mcdicine," and nothing more, was granted.

The License is now a totally different thing from what it was. It is a mere qualification to practise Physic, as contra-distinguished from Surgery. Formerly it was an entrance which Doctors of Medicine could alone take advantage of, and a mere step to the Fellowship. And for many years it had been abandoned in favour of a direct admission to that higher title; so that there was not last year at this time a single Licentiate on the roll of the College.

No such thing was ever known in Scotland as a practitioner door-plating, or card-ealling, himself Doctor, who was not either a University Graduate or a downright Quack. So it is now in Scotland. So it ought to be in England. As for any one but a University Doctor of Medicine putting M.D. to his name,—that is a simple falsehood.—I am, yours faithfully,

R. CHRISTISON.

It is needless to refer at length to the constant remonstrances in the Medical Journals during last year and this; but in August, 1859, the Council of the British Medical Association published the following resolution:—

#### ASSOCIATION INTELLIGENCE.

The following resolution, proposed by Dr. Radclyffe Hall, and seconded by Mr. Wolstenholme, was adopted at the Annual

Meeting of Council held in Liverpool :-

"That the recent proceeding of the Edinburgh College of Physicians, in the sale of their License without examination to gentlemen not already physicians, was not called for to meet any want in the profession; and that, inasmuch as it tends to lower the *status* of the physician, without elevating that of the general practitioner, it is calculated in every way to prove injurious to the body of the profession."

PHILIP H. WILLIAMS, M.D., General Secretary.

August, 1859.

On the 8th of August, also at an Adjourned Meeting of the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom, held in London, Sir Benjamin Brodie in the chair, the following determination was come to:—

5. Moved by Dr. Corrigan, and seconded by Mr. Syme—
"That the General Medical Council is of opinion that any degree or license obtained since the passing of the Medical Act,

without regular examination by the University or College granting such degree or license, ought not to be placed upon the Register, excepting ad eundem degrees, or degrees or licenses in medicine or surgery of any University in the United Kingdom, admitted to the Fellowships or Licentiateships of the several Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons."

Amendment moved by Dr. Alexander Wood, and seconded by

Dr. Williams —

"That the General Medical Council is of opinion that for the future no license or degree should be given by any of the Bodies in schedule (A) of the Medical Act, without examination."

Votes taken and amendment carried.

Confirmed -B. C. Brodie.

The mover of the amendment, it will be remarked, is President of the Edinburgh College of Physicians. This at once put a stop to the further granting of its license by the Edinburgh College without examination, and as far as that body was concerned the abuse so far terminated. But not so the abuse of its license by those who had already obtained or were still obtaining it. There was something in the name of the source from whence it had been obtained, that rendered the public more susceptible of being imposed upon by the newly assumed title. The University of Edinburgh had been long celebrated as a Medical School, and its Degree had always been free from suspicion even in the days now long gone bye, when a University degree of M.D. could be purchased even in this country by correspondence, as the license of the Edinburgh College of Physicians could be from March till August last; and the very name of Edinburgh imposed on the public, and even on some of the profession. It is needless to state that there is no connexion between the University of Edinburgh and the College of Physicians of that city.

In the midst of the hottest part of the controversy, Dr. F. Hawkins, the Registrar, was appealed to, and the following is his reply:—

DR. F. HAWKINS TO GRADUATES.

MEDICAL REGISTRATION OFFICE, June 14th, 1859,

Dr. Francis Hawkins presents his compliments to the gentlemen who have addressed him from Southampton, and begs to tell them that, although he is sorry to discontinue a courtesy which, under the sanction of no slight authority, he has been accustomed for many years to observe, since it seems that in some instances an attempt has been made to take an improper advantage of it, he has directed that in letters and receipts sent from this office, no person shall be addressed as "doctor" who has not taken the degree of M.D.

More recently warm remonstrances have been addressed to the College of Surgeons of London from all parts of England, in consequence of certain facilities it has accorded for admission to its membership of gentlemen who possessed the single qualification of L. A. C. In this case blame, if any, attaches only to the College, the recipients of its generosity take no advantage, save that of being exempted from prosecution under the penal clause of the Medical Act if they put "Surgeon" on their door, or charged for surgical attendance. They are practising no deception on the public.

A new aspect under which the abuse of titles presents itself, is the recent examination instituted by the Edinburgh College of Physicians conjointly with the College of Surgeons of that city, to grant licenses in medicine to students who have just completed their medical studies. Their names appear alphabetically, and without distinction, in the same list with the names of the members of our association who have the same license. They have the same right to assume the disputed title!

The College of Physicians of London, too, is about, it is said, to offer its license to such young men as prefer it to that of the Apothecaries' Company. They may, as justly as the Edinburgh Licentiate, claim the envied title.

Where, I would ask, is all this to end?

Such are some of the general grounds on which the resolution, referred to in the early part of these observations, was founded, and on which it was proposed to support it. And it was only on its broad and ethical claims, and setting, as far as could be, all personal feelings aside, that its proposer intended to ask the opinion of the Association. The evil is extensive, and exists in even more than

its average intensity in our Association.

Conceiving, therefore, that he had fulfilled his duty in giving due notice of his resolution, and prepared to disavow all sympathy with any local grievance, save the one which concerned every member of the Association, whose interest in the question was shown by the large attendance; and supported by the College of Physicians of Edinburgh in the step he was about to take, as shown in the reply to the following letter from its Secretary, the author of the resolution was prepared to state the grounds on which he supported it:—

25th April, 1860.

DEAR STR,—I do not know whether Dr. Christison has pointed out to you the circumstance of one of the Licentiates of the Edinburgh College of Physicians, who has no University Degree, having publicly addressed the Editor of the *Times* on March 28, as Edward Waddington, M.D. This glaring assumption, and the very general one of Dr. on their door plates and cards by the Edinburgh Licentiates in England, is causing confusion and dissatisfaction. A Meeting of the Portsmouth Registration Association is called for the 2nd of May, to consider the question.

Might I, therefore, beg the favour of a reply at your early

eonvenience to the following questions:-

1st.—Was it the intention of your College to grant more than a mere Lieense to practise Physic, or is there anything in the Local eustom or in the wording of the License to eneourage the assumption of the title either of "Dr." or "M.D."?

2nd.—Now that your College affords the opportunity, conjointly with the Edinburgh College of Surgeons, for men to receive a Medical as well as Surgical License to practice, do you make a distinction between such Licentiates and those who have been admitted on easier terms during the so-called Year of Grace?

3rd.—According to a list published on the 1st December, 1859, I find that 415 had up to that period received your License. May I further beg to know how many more up to this date have

received the License?

D. R. HALDANE, Esq., M.D., 5, Shandwick-place, Edinburgh.

> ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, Edinburgh, 28th April, 1860.

Dear Sir,—I have received your letter of the 25th instant. This College has never encouraged or authorised its Licentiates to assume any other title than that of Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. Should any irregular assumption of Medical titles have taken place, a Registration Association appears to be a very suitable body to take the matter up.

Lists of the Licentiates of this College have been published

regularly.

I am, dear Sir, your obedient servant, D. R. HALDANE.

He was prepared for, nay expected the constitutional resort to an amendment on the part of those inclined to uphold the abuse complained of. But he was not prepared for, and the Association was taken by surprise by, the declaration of the President, that though the meeting was legally called it could, or should not even hear the resolution read. One other member supported that view.

A vain attempt was made to press the question

that the resolution, or the letter last quoted should be read. The President then announced that if that question were put to the vote and decided in the affirmative, he would vacate the chair. After such a declaration, there was no alternative left. The subject was dropped, but the resolution is still in the hands of the Association.

It is under these circumstances, and with a view to counteract the unsatisfactory attempt to suppress the true state of the question, to continue an abuse which imposes on the public, and gives to those who practise the deception, what they intend as an advantage over their less aspiring competitors, that the foregoing documents are laid before the

Association and the Profession.

It is well at times to invoke "the coercion of public opinion." And it is justly remarked by an elegant writer of the day, "Acts injurious to others, encroachment on their rights, infliction on them of any loss or damage not justified by his own rights; falsehood or duplicity in dealing with them; unfair or ungenerous use of advantages over them—these are fit objects of moral reprobation, and, in grave cases, of moral retribution and punishment."

Thus it has been shown first that Universities alone, with the one exception quoted, have the power of granting Degrees, and that the prefix of "Dr." to a name is strictly synonymous with, and implies that the bearer is D.D., L.L.D., M.D., or

Mus. D. of a University.

Secondly.—That Colleges of Physicians or Apothecaries' Companies in granting a License to practise Medicine, have not the power to confer the degree of M.D. or its synonym, and do not pretend to do so. And though the Licentiates of

the College of Physicians of London, without a degree, were by courtesy styled "Dr." by the public, that courtesy is now officially withdrawn. But no such License existed in the Edinburgh College, no such courtesy has existed in Scotland, and in that country the assumption of such title

is considered empirical.

Thirdly.—Hence it follows that the improper use that has been made of the License of the Edinburgh College in England, the desire of the College to place it on its true footing, and the unlimited extension of the irregularity under existing and prospective circumstances require the interference of the Universities, of the Licensing bodies, of Registration Associations, and the Profession at large.

Fourthly.—It is evident that the familiar, popular, and colloquial designation of "doctor," as applied to a medical attendant, is not to be confounded with the open assumption of such title, with the intention of claiming an undue advantage in the eyes of the public over those who do not

claim it.

Fifthly.—If any Licentiates in Medicine have a right, without a degree, to assume the title of "Dr.," the same right must be conceded to Licen-

tiates of Apothecaries' Company.

It is due to several gentlemen who have sought the License of the Edinburgh College of Physicians to state, that they have assumed no title save that of L.R.C.P.E.; to others, that they may have adopted the disputed title in ignorance of the true state of the case; and to some that they, feeling the false position in which they were placed by mistaking the nature of the License, have, since they obtained it, taken their degree from a University. Licentiates of the London College have done the same. That step is open to all who are anxious to retain unquestioned the coveted honor; and if it is for their interest to do so, they will not hesitate. If, on the other hand, they prefer to deck themselves with a questionable title, and to brave the general opinion, they need not be surprised if the moral of the lines, familiar to school-boys, suggests itself:—

" Tumens inani Graculus superbià

"Pennas Pavoni quæ deciderant, sustulit
"Seque exornavit: deinde contemnens suos
"Formoso se pavonum immiscuit gregi."



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